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FORMATIVE PILLOW WITH FLEXIBLE SPINE

INTRODUCTION

7/18/03 This application supersedes provisional application 60/405,622 filed on August 23, 2002, for which priority is claimed, based on said application.

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to the field of therapeutic support devices and more specifically, to a device that can be shaped and reshaped so it can provide a variety of configurations in support of various jointed and appendage elements of a human body.

Therapeutic pillows, contoured pillows and adjustable pillows have been presented over time. Some have also included heat and therapy aroma options. Adjustable pillows have been contour elements that provide limited adjustments with straps and/or slider elements. The limited span adjustment offered by these devices accommodates only minor variables, specifically the size of a specified element, of one human being to another.

Another means of adjustable contour has been presented with air or water inflation devices. These are single or multi-cavity configurations that likewise offer limited adjustment and limited in support to a specific element of the human body.

Examples of these devices are disclosed in U. S. Patent Numbers:

4,771,493, 5,360, 017, 5,708,999, 5,813,065, 6,182, 311, 6,202, 234. Although this is not a complete listing, it is representative listing of contoured and/or adjustable therapeutic devices currently available.

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The problem with these devices is that they all, although each is a different shape, are fixed in form configuration. This limits each device for application to a specified single area of the human body. Although some cited devices have limited adjustment, this is for the minor consideration of a comfort-zone fit to small, medium and large body types. None of these can be formed and/or reformed to accommodate or support a full range of human body joints, niches and curves.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a round cylinder-shaped pillow that has at the core a device that allows formation and reformation of shape over the entire length. The type and placement of the materials in the device is paramount to the form shaping and reshaping potential of this therapeutic pillow.

The diameter and length of the Formative Pillow With Flexible Spine can vary in size. Small diameter devices would most often be applied as a cervical or appendage support. Medium to larger devices would provide a therapeutic pillow application to a variety of body areas such as the head, neck, arms, back, hips, legs or full body. The variables in size, shaping and re-shaping leaves little limit to the potential application and re-application this invention can provide as a therapeutic support pillow to various prescribed or desired areas of the human body.

The device may also include heat and/or aroma therapy elements to add a desired, or prescribed, therapeutic value. Some shaping or contouring may also be applied to effect a particular and pleasing appearance in addition to the valued support condition.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a sectioned isometric view of the present invention. The core element, flexible spine, is shown in relationship to the surrounding formable elements of the preferred embodiment.

Figure 2 depicts two distinctly different applications of the invention to a supine human figure.

Figure 3a and Figure 3b depict two of the virtually unlimited number of shapes the preferred embodiment can be formed and reformed to accommodate a variety of needs and/or desires of a user.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A brief description of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is set forth herein with sufficient detail to allow a person skilled in the art to understand the operation and fully utilize the invention. The numbered parts of the description refer to the parts identified in the attached figures in which like parts bear like numerals throughout the invention.

Referring to Figure 1, the device 10 is shown by means of a sectioned isometric view to best display the relationship of all functional elements. The flexible spine 11 is the core elements of the device. It has a diameter of about 1.5-3 inches. Note that it consists of three metal wires, preferably steel having a gauge of about 10-12 AWG, equally spaced about an axis ~~of~~ the flexible spine and have caps 13 at each end. These wires are not only flexible but have the capacity to withstand considerable torsional stress in the course of shaping the pillow. The wire spine is surrounded by a vinyl casing 20 about 4 inches in diameter. Surrounding the flexible spine is a foam rubber sleeve 15 that also has caps 14 at each end. These elements establish the core that allows for repeated firm formation and reformation of shapes over the length of the device. Polyester or cotton material is wrapped about the core elements to a desired pillow diameter of 5-9 inches by an inner casing and a cotton or similar outer pillow case 17. The outer pillow case can be made in a variety of styles or patterns and can be held in position by running an elastic cord 18 through the seam of the outer pillowcase and tying the ends of the cord together.

Referring to Figure 2, a supine female figure is shown with two distinctly different shapes of the invention to illustrate the versatility of the device in a "U" application 20 and a multi-curved application 21.

Referring to Figures 3a and 3b, these again illustrate the versatility of the invention to be shaped, reshaped and contoured. Specific to 3a, the multi-curved application 21 can also have an expanded contour shape 22 applied at any desired position. Specific to 3b, the "U" shape 20 is illustrated to show a contrasting shape potential of this invention.

From the foregoing, it is readily apparent that a useful embodiment of the present invention has been herein described and illustrated.